

Archive / M / Ron Nasden / P. + P
I.D. 1934

E. ARMAND

Anarchism
and
Individualism

One Shilling or Twenty-five Cents

ANARCHISM
AND
INDIVIDUALISM

THREE ESSAYS BY

E. ARMAND

PUBLISHED BY S. E. PARKER

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

EMILE ARMAND—the author of these essays—was born in Paris on March 28, 1872 and died in Rouen on February 19, 1962. He received a secular education, but was attracted to Christianity in his youth and for some years was active in the Salvation Army. He then came under the influence of Leo Tolstoy, allying himself with Christian anarchism. After a time he abandoned Christianity altogether and became an anarchist-individualist, which he remained until he died, carrying on his work of propaganda to the end. (Ten years in prisons and concentration camps, notwithstanding).

Armand edited and published several anarchist journals, wrote a number of books and many pamphlets. He also published the writings of other individualists and of anarchists of different schools of thought. Very little of his immense output has been translated into English. It is hoped that the publication of this pamphlet will stimulate interest in his ideas, so that more of his work may be made known.

The original translations of "Our Kind of Individualist" and "Anarchist Individualism as Life and Activity" were first published in *Freedom* Printed in Great Britain by Express Printers, London E1

Published 1962 by S.E. Parker, 75 Cotswold Road, Bristol 3, England

Our Kind of Individualist

ESSENTIALLY, OUR PAPER IS intended for a certain category of people only, a select body, distinct from the general run of society, who, in default of a better term, must be referred to as "our kind of individualist" and who are, it must be understood, the only variety of individualist we are interested in. This sort of person is invariably a "non-conformist" with regard to the ethics and aesthetics of the bourgeoisie, the present system of education, and, indeed, with most majority opinions in society. He has taken due thought, and has jettisoned all those phantoms, those abstract principles which had haunted him when he floated back and forth on the tides of convention, carried along like a cork on such currents as "everybody does it", as the conformer must be. He has created for himself a personality which resists the influences surrounding it, which pays no attention to the vociferous, the braggart, or the fickle mob. He wants to know where he is going, though not without having carefully considered the route to be followed, and then without ever losing sight of the fact that his "freedom" must always be dependent upon his "responsibility".

What else is "our" individualist? He is a person who is united with those of "his world" by comradeship, which we define as "a voluntary agreement between individuals aimed at eliminating all avoidable friction and unpleasantry from their relationships". Now this definition is more than twenty years old, dating from 1924, and in 1939 I again wrote: "Our conception of comradeship is positive, not negative; constructive, not destructive." It is because such an idea is creative of good will, contentment and harmony that it will tend to reduce to a minimum the pain of living, and this in a society which is in itself indifferent. "And all this can be achieved without the protection of the State, the intervention of governments, or the mediation of the law."

But our kind of individualist is not only mind, spirit, thought. He is neither dry, nor niggardly of heart. If exclusively a rationalist, he would feel himself incomplete, so it is a necessity for him to be both sensible and "sentimental". This explains his plan for freeing "his world" of useless and avoidable suffering. He knows that this is possible when one speaks and understands "the language of the

heart", when one prefers agreement to struggle, abstention to the unlatching of actions dictated by bitterness, animosity or spite.

* * *

Individualism as we conceive and propagate it is understood seriously, without equivocation, passionately. It postulates rectitude, constancy, reciprocity, support, comprehensiveness, indeed compassion. It implies fidelity to the pledged word, whatever the matter in hand may be; care not to interfere under any pretext in the affairs of another comrade (unless asked), or encroach on his rights, nor to withdraw any rights once given except in cases of betrayed trust. This individualism does not wish to provoke disquiet, disillusionment, torment or tears. Its freedom of affirmation must cease when it threatens another with hardship or pain.

* * *

Our kind of individualist must not be misunderstood. He is no moralist. He loathes "conventional lies", the false pretences of *petit-bourgeoisie*. He has discarded all preconceived ideas; he recognizes as a motive nothing outside himself. But he knows quite well that an individualist must give as well as take. He does not ignore the fact that the "gentleman's agreement" must be honoured equally with the formal bond.

He repudiates violence, imposition, constraint, which is not to say that he accepts being exploited, duped, made a game of or inferior, whatever his personal appearance or level of culture might be. He does not wish to receive more than he gives, nor give more than he receives. He is proud. He sets a value upon his person. It means nothing to him that anyone else knows him only as a "poor relation". Towards those who would humiliate him he reacts and considers himself in a state of legitimate defense . . . but he is always ready to make peace on a man to man basis.

* * *

Yes, our kind of individualism loves life. It makes no secret of it—it revels in the joy of living, but in a discreet manner, without din or noisy demonstrations. It recognizes happiness as its goal. It welcomes anything that will increase its receptiveness and appreciation for either the products of the human imagination or those of nature. No asceticism, it is repelled by mortification. It is conscious of personal dignity. It can both sow and reap. It pays no attention to what "they say." It is neither young nor old; it is the age it feels itself to be. And while there is a drop of blood left in its veins, it will fight for a place in the sun.

But this joy, the enjoyment of living, the conquest of a life without prejudice, the individualist does not intend to gain at the expense of others, whether his friends or comrades, or only the most humble

and least important person in his society. He refuses to play the rôle of trouble-maker; he would not be the cause of any grief for anyone. He abhors the idea that one of the members of his circle should be in any way frustrated on account of his ambitions—on has account. He could never pardon himself for such conduct.

Nor does he wish to have anything in common with those armchair Nietzscheans or weekend Stirnerites who imagine, poor wretches, that they are "affirming their individuality" by petty dishonesty in money matters, or by forcing themselves upon the companion of a friend in prison.

In short, the individualist, as we know him, abominates brutes, cretins, rogues, schemers, twisters, skunks and so forth, no matter with what ideology they wish to conceal themselves.

But he also recognizes that practice does not always conform to theory, and that often, though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. He holds nothing against his associates on account of their infirmities or their weaknesses; he freely forgives them. Concessions are not rarities with him. And any damage he does, or suffering he causes, he will pay for or rectify to the best of his ability. But further than that he will not go—anything beyond compensation is extortion.

In the midst of a social order in which, despite frequent pompous discourses and bombastic declarations from allegedly responsible persons, the pledged word is more often broken than not and the philosophy of "get out of your problems as best you can" is the reigning attitude of man to his fellow-man, our conception of comradeship, as described above, raises itself like a lighthouse to remind the world that there are still persons capable of resisting the seductions and gross appetites of our philistine society.

We believe that our kind of individualism has a bigger following than might at first sight appear, and that, though scattered, there is a not inconsiderable number of persons who are trying to re-integrate themselves on these lines; people who have revolted against social determinism and who have decided to submit all ideas to their own personal tests. These people we look upon as a psychological group apart from those who remain in the mass. To them our call goes out.

We look at "association" as a concrete manifestation of comradeship taking some co-operative or mutualist form, always providing that it is based on a sound understanding of the participants' characters. We know perfectly well that if in this association our personality affirms itself, that if the goal sought for is attained, it is at the cost of our "liberty". When he associates our kind of individualist accepts the disadvantages along with the advantages and he does not complain. (Adapted from a translation of A Qui Est Destiné "L'Unique" by A.S.)

Anarchist Individualism

as

Life and Activity

I

TO SAY THAT THE anarchist movement embraces several tendencies is not to put forward anything new; it would be surprising if it were otherwise. Non-political, outside of parties, this movement owes its existence solely to the individual personalities of which it is composed. Since there is no *a priori* anarchist programme, since there are only anarchists, it follows that each one of those who call themselves anarchists has his own conception of anarchism. Persecutions, difficulties and conflicts of all kinds, demand that whoever professes anarchism should be possessed of a mentality which is out of the ordinary, which is reflective, and which is in a state of continual reaction against a society composed of people who, on the contrary, are not reflective and are inclined to accept ready-made doctrines which make no demands on their intelligence. To ask that all anarchists should have similar views on anarchism is to ask the impossible. Hence a wealth of diverging conceptions are to be found among them.

As the word "anarchy" etymologically signifies the negation of governmental authority, the absence of government, it follows that one indissoluble bond unites the anarchists. This is antagonism to all situations regulated by imposition, constraint, violence, governmental oppression, whether these are a product of all, a group, or of one person. In short, whoever denies that the intervention of government is necessary for human relationships is an anarchist.

But this definition would have only a negative value did it not possess, as a practical complement, a conscious attempt to live outside this domination and servility which are incompatible with the anarchist conception. An anarchist, therefore, is an individual who, whether he has been brought to it by a process of reasoning or by sentiment, lives to the greatest possible extent in a state of legitimate defense against authoritarian encroachments. From this it follows that anarchist

christ individualism—the tendency which we believe contains the most profound realization of the anarchist idea—is not merely a philosophical doctrine—it is an *attitude*, an individual *way of life*.

The anarchist individualist is not simply converted intellectually to ideas which will be realized one day some centuries hence. He tries *now*—for the present is the only time which matters for him—to practise his conceptions in everyday life, in his relations with his comrades, and in his contact with those others who do not share his convictions.

All healthy organisms have a characteristic tendency to reproduce themselves. Organisms which are sick, or in a process of degeneration, have no such tendency—and this applies to the mind as well as the body. So the anarchist individualist tends to reproduce himself, to perpetuate his spirit in other individuals who will share his views and who will make it possible for a state of affairs to be established from which authoritarianism has been banished. It is this desire, this will, not only to *live*, but also to *reproduce oneself*, which we shall call "activity".

These considerations explain our title: "Anarchist Individualism as Life and Activity". Tending to live his own individual life at the risk of clashing intellectually, morally, and economically, with his environment, the anarchist individualist at the same time tries to create in the same environment, by means of selection, individuals who, like himself, are free from the prejudices and superstitions of authority, in order that the greatest possible number of men may actually live their own lives, uniting through personal affinities to practise their conceptions as far as is possible.

The anarchist individualist does not live in intellectual isolation. As individuals who share his ideas increase in number, so will his chances improve of seeing his aspirations realized, and as a result he will be happier. As individuals of his own "species" increase, so will the power of environment over his own life diminish. The wider his propaganda spreads and the more his activity grows, the more will his life be intensified.

His relationships with his comrades are based on reciprocity, on mutualism, on *comradeship*, and take numerous forms, all voluntary; free agreements of every type and in all spheres; respect for the pledged word and the carrying out of promises and engagements freely consented to. It is in this fashion that the individualist of our kind practices *mutual aid in his species*.

A conscious individual—seeking to create and select others—from being determined by his environment, he tends to become self-determining, to live his own life fully, to be *active* in the normal sense of the word. One cannot conceive the anarchist individualist in any other way.

In the first place, then, the anarchist is—in relation to all social conceptions based upon constraint—an individual who negates; anarchism is an individualist concept and a product of individuals. The anarchist is naturally an individualist.

The legalists base society upon law. In the eyes of the law those who constitute society are no more than cyphers. Whether the law proceeds from one man alone (autocracy), from several (oligarchy), or from the majority of the members of a society (democracy), the citizen must suppress even his most rightful aspirations before it. The legalists maintain that if the individual subjects himself to the law, which allegedly emanates from society, it is in the interests of society and in his own interest since he is a member of society.

Indeed, society as we know it can be summarized as follows: The ruling classes, through the intermediary of the State, ensure that only their own views on culture, morality, and economic conditions, are allowed to penetrate to the masses. They set up their own views in the form of civil dogmas, which no man may violate under pain of punishment, just as in former times, during the reign of the Church, there were severe penalties for daring to challenge religious dogmas. The State—the laic form of the Church—has replaced the Church—which was the religious form of the State—but the aim of both has always been to form, not free beings, but true believers or perfect citizens. In other words, slaves to dogma or law.

The anarchist replies that when solidarity is imposed from without it is worthless; that when a contract is enforced there is no longer any question of rights or duties; that coercion releases him from the bonds which attach him to a so-called society whose executives he knows only in the guise of administrators, law-givers, judges and policemen; that he supports only the solidarity of his everyday relationships. Fiction and imposed solidarity is worthless solidarity.

The socialists base society upon economics. According to them the whole of life resolves itself into a question of production and consumption. Once you solve this problem you will automatically solve the human problem, with its complexity of intellectual and moral experiences. The individual may be conscious, he may be the greatest drunkard or the worst of comrades, but he is only of interest when considered as a producer or a consumer. The call goes out to all—to those who think and to those who do not. All have a right to the collectivist banquet, all have the right to the result of effort without needing to attempt the effort. It is necessary only to unite and to grasp the power that will permit the seizure of society, and as soon as society has been seized, collectivism will be established and will

function, willy-nilly, since any recalcitrants will be compelled to obey, otherwise they will disappear from circulation.

Socialism has been called the “religion of economics” and it is certain that a socialist metaphysic exists. This doctrine teaches that all the products of human activity are governed by economics. This is by no means difficult to grasp and is within the ability of every mentality. From the moment of its triumph socialism, in all its various shades, demands of its adherent that he be a good producer and a no less good consumer, putting his trust with regard to the organization of production and consumption in the wisdom of delegates, whether elected or imposed. Socialism is not concerned to make him an individual—it will make him an official.

The anarchist bases society neither upon the law nor upon economics. Good citizen, good bureaucrat, good producer, good consumer—this flour-spattered meal-trough has no message for him. After all, if it can be proved that in certain cases economics have determined intellect or morals, can it not also be proved that intellect or morals have often determined economics? And one should not pass in silence the rôle of the sexual factor.

The real truth must surely be that they mingle with and jostle one another; that they alternate and are mutually determined. From reformist socialism to revolutionary anti-parliamentary communism via trade unionism, all these socialist systems make a mockery of the individual and of free agreement between individuals. They give pride of place to the majority, to the economic contract imposed by the greatest number.

The anarchist proclaims that a transformation in mental outlook will always be accompanied by a transformation in the economic system; that a new social edifice cannot be built with stones that are crumbling into dust; that beings who have been moulded by prejudice can never build anything but a structure filled with prejudice; that it is necessary first of all to lay down solid materials, to select individuals. If he joins a trades union, regardless of its colour, the anarchist enters it purely as a member of a particular trade, in the hope of obtaining by collective action an improvement in his own lot—but he will see nothing anarchistic in gaining a wage increase, or a reduction of working hours. From an economic point of view, under present conditions, each anarchist does what he thinks best for himself—one by working for a boss, another by acting outside the law; one benefits from the advantages obtained by association, another by participating in a “free milieu”; yet another by satisfying his needs as an artisan. None of these ways of getting by are more “anarchist” than the others—they are makeshifts, sometimes “evasions”, neither more nor less.

III

Since the anarchist conception places the individual at the base of all these practical consequences, it follows that it takes no heed of collective morality and the general pattern of life. The anarchist regulates his life not according to the law, like the legalists, nor according to a given collective metaphysic or mystique, like the religious, the nationalists or the socialists, for example, but according to his own needs and personal aspirations. He is ready to make the concessions necessary to live with his comrades or his friends, but without making an obsession of these concessions.

The anarchist knows full well that if his life is to be enjoyed to the full, if it is to be beautiful and rich in every kind of experience, he will not be able to appreciate it if he is unable to master his inclinations and passions. He has no intention of turning his life into a sort of English garden, carefully cultivated, monotonous and dismal. No, he wants to live fully and intensely, he attaches a thousand horses to his chariot, but he does not forget to put a bridle on the neck of each one.

The anarchist denies authority because he knows he can live without it. He is guided by the play of agreements freely entered into with his comrades, never trampling on the liberty of any of them in order that none may trample on his.

But in relation to those whose amorphism, ignorance or interest interferes with his living his life, the anarchist feels himself a stranger. Moreover, inwardly he remains refractory—fatally refractory—morally, intellectually, economically (The capitalist economy and the directed economy, the speculators and the fabricators of single systems, are equally repugnant to him.) The full consciousness that none of his acts can debase him inwardly is for him a sufficient criterion. Surely the essential thing is that he remains himself?

Again, is not the anarchist constantly in a state of legitimate self-defense against constraint and social servitude?

IV

Anarchist work, activity, and propaganda, therefore, do not consist of swaying the crowd, but of creating and selecting—my repetition is intentional—conscious individuals, free from prejudice. It is above all a work of undermining, of irony, of criticism, a work of education, but also a work of reconstruction, of the sculpting of a personality free from dominant spooks. A work of free examination and of independent research in all fields.

Instead of talking of love in general, the anarchist talks simply of unity and alliance between comrades, between friends, who feel attracted to each other by affinities of one kind or another, by reciprocity.

Instead of postponing individual happiness to the socialist or communist calends, he extols his present achievement of it by proclaiming the joy of living.

Instead of building the great structure of Harmony with material taken at random from the rubble amid the ruins of former buildings, he shows that the first task to be done is to remove the stones one by one from the great human arena.

Anarchists no more want to be masters than they want to be servants—they no more want to exercise violence than to submit to it. They expose, they propose, but they do not impose. They are pioneers, attached to no party, non-conformists, standing outside herd morality and conventional "good" and "evil"—"a-social", a "species" apart, one might say. They go forward, stumbling, sometimes falling, sometimes triumphant, sometimes vanquished. But they do go forward, and by living for themselves, these "egoists", they dig the furrow, they open the breach through which will pass those who deny archism, the unique ones who will succeed them.

(Adapted from an English version by N.G.)

The Future Society

INDIVIDUALISTS CONCERN THEMSELVES little with a future society. That idea has been exploited and can nourish the believer just as exploitation of paradise nourishes the priest; but it resembles paradise, in that a description of its wonders has an enervating, soporific influence on those who hear it; it makes them forget present oppression, tyranny and bondage; it weakens energy, emasculates initiative. The individualist does not put his hope in the future society. He lives in the present moment, and he wants to draw from it the maximum results. Individualist activity is essentially a present work and a present accomplishment. The individualist knows that the present is heir to the past and pregnant with the future. It is not in some tomorrow that he

wants to see the end of encroachment by society on the individual, of invasion and oppression of one person by another. It is today, in his own life, that the individualist wants to win his independence. To be sure, the individualist often fails in his attempts to free himself from the yoke of existing domination. Considering the forces of opposition and oppression, this is very natural. But the future will profit automatically from what he gains. The individualist knows very well that he will not explore the whole forest, but the path he opens will remain, and those who follow him, if they want to, will take good care of it and broaden it.

The individualist is incapable, it is true, of outlining in full detail the map of "future humanity" as it would be if his demands were won. Thus he cannot make a topographical work; but on the other hand he can foresee with certainty both the nature of the terrain and the quality of the liquid that will fill the rivers, and the possible kind of culture. "The new humanity" is not for him absolutely *terra incognita*.

The individualist can, therefore, even now indicate what a "future humanity" will be. He knows it will resemble the present world in nothing—less by changes in detail than by a complete transformation of the general mentality, a different understanding of relations among men, a universal and individual change of state of mind, that will make certain methods and certain institutions impossible.

Thus the individualist can affirm with certainty that authoritarianism will in no case continue in the future society. To imagine a "world to come" where there would still be a trace of domination, coercion and duty is nonsense.

The individualist is sure that there will no longer be room for intervention of the State—of a governmental, social-legislative, penal, disciplinary institution or administration—in the thought, conduct and activity of human beings.

The individualist knows that relations and agreements among men will be arrived at voluntarily; understandings and contracts will be for a specified purpose and time, and not obligatory; they will always be subject to termination; there will not be a clause or an article of an agreement or contract that will not be weighed and discussed before being agreed to; a unilateral contract, obliging someone to fill an engagement he has not personally and knowingly accepted, will be impossible. The individualist knows that no economic, political or religious majority—no social group whatever—will be able to compel a minority, or one single man, to conform against his will to its decisions or decrees.

We have here a whole series of certainties on which there is no quibbling. "Future humanity", as the individualist conceives it, "unrolls

itself" without terminal station, without point of arrival. It is eternally becoming, indefinitely evolving. A humanity of the dynamic type, if one can so express oneself, ignores stops *en route*; or if there are stops at stations, it understands that this is the time strictly necessary to let off those who want to try an experience that will involve only them.

The future humanity, "the new humanity", as the individualists understand it, constitutes a gigantic arena where, as much in thought and custom as in technique, all imaginable projects, plans, associations and practices will struggle and compete with each other.

It is because of these well-established characteristics that "the new humanity" in no way resembles, can have no meeting-point with ours, "the old humanity". It will be poly-dynamic, polymorphous, multilateral.

When someone asks exactly how, in "the future humanity" that individualists want, one will solve some litigious point, it is clear that the questioner does not understand. But one can reply with certainty that there will never be a recourse to violence, compulsion or force to adjust a difference.

A good number of individualists think that the coming of "the future humanity" that individualists want, depends on an attack, on serious, rational and continued propaganda, against authoritarianism in all spheres of human activity, whether in political or social economy, in morals, in art, in science, in literature. Arguing from the fact that the individual is born into—is thrust into—an already-organized society without being allowed to consent to it or reject it, or able to defend himself from it or oppose it, they deduce that this primordial fact confers on the victim the *right to life*, without restrictions or reservations.

That is, the right to consumption, independent of economic politics; the right to individual choice of the method of production and the means of production; the right to choose the consumers he wants to benefit by his exchange; the right to choose whether to associate with others, and, if he refuses to associate, the right to the means of production sufficient to maintain himself; the right to choose his associates and the purpose for which he associates.

In other words, the right to behave as he finds most advantageous, at his own risk, with no limit other than encroachment on the behaviour of others (to put it another way, the use of violence, compulsion or coercion towards one who behaves differently than you).

The right to the guarantee that he will not be forced to do what he considers personally disagreeable or disadvantageous, or hindered from doing what he wants to (he will not, therefore, resort to physical force, deceit or fraud in order to gain what appears useful, advantageous or agreeable to him). The right to circulate freely, to move wherever

he pleases, to propagate those doctrines, opinions, propositions and theses that he feels impelled to, with the reservation of not using violence in any form to put them into practice; the right to experiment in all fields and all forms, to publicize his experiences, to recruit the associates needed for their realization, on condition that only those who really want to will participate and that those who no longer want to can withdraw; the right to consumption and to means of production, even if he refuses to participate in any system, method or institution that seems to him disadvantageous.

The right to life, that is, the right to make one's own happiness as one feels impelled to, alone or together with those one feels particularly attracted to, without fear of intervention or intrusion by personalities or organizations incompatible with one's ego or with the association of which one is momentarily part.

The individualists think that the guarantee of the right to life, thus conceived, is the least a human individual can demand when he realizes what an authoritarian and arbitrary act was committed in bringing him into the world. They think also that all propaganda for these demands favours the advent of a transformed mentality, characteristic of all new humanity.

The struggle for the abolition of the monopoly of the State, or of any other executive form replacing it—against its intervention as centralizer, administrator, regulator, moderator, organizer or otherwise in any relation among individuals—equally favours, these individualists think, the emergence of this mentality.

I am aware that a good number of anarchist individualists have no interest in the "future humanity". For them: "Without risk of erring too far, we can assume: 1. That there will never be a general, collective, life from which authority is absolutely excluded; 2. That in all societies there will be individuals or groups who are protestants, malcontents, critics and negotiators. Without doubt, we will witness transformations, improvements, modifications, even upheavals. The capitalist system of production may vanish in the end, gradually or forcibly. Little by little, one will work less, earn more; reforms will come, menacingly, inevitably. There may be an economic regime unlike ours. But whatever the social system, good sense indicates that its permanence depends on a system of regulation adapted to the average mentality of the people in it. Whether they want to, or not, those to the right or left of the average regulation must conform their behaviour to it; and it matters little whether its basis is exclusively economic, or biological, or moral.

"Experience indicates that towards refractories they will use the only arguments men can dispose of: politics or violence, persuasion or compulsion, bargaining or command.

"The crowd always goes towards him who speaks well and carries himself well. Its anger last no longer than its admirations. It is always easy to "fool and seduce. One can no more base oneself on it now than a century or a thousand years ago. The mass belongs to the strongest, the most superficial, the most slippery. In such a situation, what do anarchist individualists do, what will 'they do? "

"1. Some reply that they will remain within the *milieu* and struggle to affirm themselves—without concerning themselves too much with choice of means, for their great concern—the concern of their lives—is, at all costs, to react against external determination of their lives. It is to affirm oneself if not to diminish the pressure of the *milieu* on oneself. They are reactors, refractories, propagandists, revolutionaries, utilizing all possible means of battle: education, violence, ruse, illegalism. They seize occasions when the Power is abusive to stir up rebelliousness among its victims. But it is for pleasure that they act, and not for the profit of the sufferers, or by abusing them by vain words. They go, they come, mingling in a movement or withdrawing, as their independence is or is not in danger of restriction, parting company with those they have called to revolt as soon as they pretend to follow them or constitute themselves a party. Perhaps they *do*, more than they *are*.

"2. Others situate themselves on the margin of the *milieu*. Having somehow obtained means of production, they preoccupy themselves with making their separation from the *milieu* a reality, trying to produce enough for themselves, while eliminating the factitious and the surplus.

"Because men, in general, seem to them hardly worth bothering about, they maintain only the minimum relations with people and human institutions, and their social life is limited to the company of selected 'comrades of ideas'. They group together at times, but only temporarily, and the limited association of which they are part is never delegated power to dispose of their product. The rest of the world exists for them only little or much—to the extent that they need it. Perhaps they *are*, more than they *do*.

"Between these two conceptions of individualist life, the diverse anarchist individualist temperaments range themselves."

For the comrades whose opinions I have just transcribed, any sketch of "future humanity", any hypothesis of an individualist *milieu*, is a work of imagination, pure literary fantasy. They maintain that, for the mentality, the general will, really to transform itself, it would be necessary that "the species on the road to degeneration, the 'directed categories', deliver the earth of their presence: and that is not likely." It was only justice to make known this point of view that no individualist forgets, even when he speaks of becoming social.

For having depicted in broad strokes a tableau of "the new humanity" to which we would like to evolve, we cannot be taxed with being "future-society-ists". The anarchist individualist is not a *future-society-ist*; a presentist, he could not, without bad reasoning and illogic, think of sacrificing his being, or his having, to the coming of a state of things he will not immediately enjoy. Individualist thought admits no equivocation on this point. It is amid the old humanity, the humanity of dominators and dictators of all kinds, that the "new humanity" appears, takes shape, becomes. Individualists are permanent and personal revolutionaries, they try to practise, in themselves, in their circle, in their relations with their comrades of ideas, their particular concepts of individual and group life. Every time one of the characteristics of the "new humanity" implants itself in the mores, every time one or more human beings, at their risk and peril, anticipate them by word or action, "the new humanity is realized".

In the domain of art, letters, science, ethics, personal conduct, even in the economic sphere, one finds individuals who think and act contrary to the customs, usages, routines, prejudices and conventions of the "old society", and attempt to break them down. In their kind of activity, they too represent the new humanity. Already the individualists take part in it, by their way of behaving towards the old world, because they reveal in each of their actions their intention, their will, their hope of seeing the individual free himself from the constraint of the herd, the mentality of the mass.

Can one hope that after many a flux and reflux, many a sad attempt, humanity will some day come to conscientious practice of reciprocity, to the anti-authoritarian, individualist—anarchist individualist—solution, the solution of equal liberty?

Can one anticipate that, more enlightened, more educated, better informed, the inhabitants of our planet will at last come to understand that neither coercion, nor domination of the majority, the elite, the dictatorship of an autocrat, class or caste, are capable of assuring happiness—that is, of reducing avoidable suffering? It is the secret of the future.

But, optimistic or pessimistic in this respect, the anarchist individualist will not the less continue to denounce the prejudice which gives statist authority its force; the *superstition* of necessary government; and to live as though the prejudice and this superstition did not exist.

(Translated by D.T.W.)